

H. Res. 760

In the House of Representatives, U. S.,

November 3, 2021.

Whereas, on July 11, 2021, thousands of Cubans took to the streets to express their dissatisfaction with Cuba's continued repression of its people, its worsening economic situation, and shortages of food and medicine;

Whereas these demonstrations were the largest protests on the island in over 25 years, with courageous Cuban men, women, and youth taking to the streets in cities and towns across the country;

Whereas the Cuban regime arbitrarily denied a request to allow a peaceful demonstration on November 15, 2021, which the organizers have specified would be "against violence, to demand that all the rights of all Cubans be respected, for the release of political prisoners and for the solution of our differences through democratic and peaceful means";

Whereas the Cuban regime also denied an earlier request for protests to be held on November 20, 2021, stating that date was off-limits because it would conflict with "national defense day" and claiming without evidence that "subversive organizations" with links to the United States Government were promoting the protest;

Whereas artists, academics, activists, and journalists have been long engaged in ongoing protests calling for an end to Cuba's persecution, censorship, arbitrary detention, and other human rights violations;

Whereas expanded internet access is foundational for the Cuban people to be able to exercise their internationally recognized human rights of access to information and freedom of expression, creating opportunities for Cubans to communicate more openly with one another and for their voices to be heard around the world;

Whereas numerous public reports and first-hand accounts revealed that the Cuban regime deliberately blocked access to certain websites and messaging apps, throttled internet access, and launched targeted attacks to disrupt the internet connections of private Cuban citizens;

Whereas during the July protests, regime security officials physically assaulted domestic and international journalists, including Associated Press correspondent Ramon Espinosa, and prevented dozens of reporters from leaving their homes to report on the protests, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists;

Whereas Cuba is among the most restrictive countries in the world for journalists, ranked 171 of 180 countries in Reporters Without Borders' 2021 World Press Freedom Index;

Whereas Cuban human rights groups report there were already at least 150 political prisoners in Cuba before the July 11 protests, and Cuba has reportedly been responsible for over 400 additional arrests or forced disappearances since then;

Whereas hundreds of Cubans who participated in the July protests continue to face unjust detention and other forms of retribution, including dozens who have been sentenced in summary trials without due process and dozens of others who remain unaccounted for;

Whereas United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet expressed concern about “the excessive force against demonstrators in Cuba and the arrest of a large number of people, including journalists” and noted “it is particularly worrying that these include individuals allegedly held incommunicado and people whose whereabouts are unknown”;

Whereas, on July 25, 2021, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the foreign ministers of 20 countries issued a statement to “condemn the mass arrests and detentions of protestors in Cuba and call on the government to respect the universal rights and freedoms of the Cuban people, including the free flow of information to all Cubans”;

Whereas, on October 17, 2021, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Brian A. Nichols said “Denying the right of peaceful assembly to Cubans this November 15th shows the Cuban regime’s disregard for the human rights and freedoms of its people. This and other blatant attempts to intimidate their citizens is a clear sign the regime won’t listen to what Cubans have to say.”;

Whereas over the summer, Cuba has seen record numbers of COVID–19 infections and deaths, pushing hospitals and health centers to near collapse; and

Whereas basic medicines and common goods have become scarce throughout the country and economists estimate Cuba's economic conditions will become even worse in the coming months: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses strong solidarity with the Cuban people who took to the streets throughout the country on July 11, 2021, and with those who plan to peacefully demonstrate on November 15, 2021, to once again express their desire to live in a free country with self-determination;

(2) condemns the Cuban regime's violent repression of peaceful protesters and journalists and its other efforts to restrict the Cuban people's right to peacefully protest, freely express themselves, and exercise their other universal human rights;

(3) calls on Cuba to end all efforts to block or throttle the Cuban people's internet access or restrict their access to certain websites or applications and to permit them to freely communicate online, including during future demonstrations and peaceful protests;

(4) calls on members of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, the Cuban Ministry of the Interior, and Cuba's National Revolutionary Police Force to not arrest or detain peaceful protesters, provide due process to all individuals, and immediately release all political pris-

oners and arbitrarily detained individuals still in their custody; and

(5) urges the Biden administration to—

(A) work with Cuban activists, civil society groups, private United States companies, and the international community to expand internet access for the Cuban people;

(B) support the Cuban people’s inherent right to demonstrate peacefully in the name of democracy and human rights;

(C) continue to stand behind the aspirations of the Cuban people for freedom, for dignity, for prosperity, and the basic rights that they have been denied by the regime since 1959;

(D) assess whether the United States can develop methods to allow remittances, medical supplies, and other forms of support from the United States to directly benefit the Cuban people in ways that alleviate humanitarian suffering without providing United States dollars to the Cuban military; and

(E) rally the international community to join the United States in condemning human rights

abuses and honoring the Cuban people's demands
for freedom.

Attest:

Clerk.